

Dateline DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene



Black History Month

Rise to Achieve Excellence:

Yes You Can! is the theme for this year's celebration of Black History Month. The festivities will be held on Wednesday, February 18 in the O'Connor Building lobby from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Gaynelle Colburn, a world-class motivational speaker, will serve as Master of Ceremonies and will address the gathering at 11:30 a.m.

As in previous years, vendors will provide information and conduct health screenings. Also, students from the Baltimore City Public School System will attend.

For more information, please contact the Office of Community Relations at 410-767-6600.

Tobacco Use Rates Decline in Maryland

Smoking rates among middle and high school youth and adults in Maryland are at some of the lowest levels in more than a decade, according to a report released by the Department's Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program.

The report, *Monitoring Changing Tobacco Use Behaviors in Maryland*, shows that about 85 percent of Marylanders do not smoke cigarettes. Cigarette smoking declined significantly among students in middle school (30.6 percent) and high school (23.5 percent), and among all adults (12 percent).

Other key findings indicate that overall tobacco use has declined by 14 percent among Maryland youth and by 9.2 percent among adults. The report also shows declining smoking rates among minority populations, with significant reductions in tobacco use among pregnant women and middle and high school-aged youth.

Data from the report also indicates that too many youth start smoking, too many adults face obstacles to quit, and too many children and adults are exposed to secondhand smoke.

The report examines data collected from surveys conducted last fall -- the Maryland Tobacco Adult Survey and the Maryland Tobacco Youth Survey. The results are compared

Congratulations to...

Dr. Susan Panny, director of the Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs, who was recently named the Distinguished Health Professional of 2003 by the Maryland Chapter of the March of Dimes.

This award is in memory of Dr. Jonas Salk and was created to honor medical professionals who have dedicated their professional lives to improving the health of America's babies. The individual selected exemplifies excellence, dedication, innovation, integrity and compassion in their field.



Continued

Tobacco Use Rates Decline in Maryland *Cont.*

with the Maryland Tobacco Baseline Study conducted in the fall of 2000.

The Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program was launched in 2001 after the completion of the baseline study. It is modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs and is entirely funded from a portion of Maryland's proceeds from the national tobacco settlement.

The program incorporates a variety of elements at statewide and local levels, including public health initiatives, education efforts, school-based and community prevention programs, cessation programs, enforcement of youth access laws, and counter-marketing and grassroots education, such as the *Maryland -- Smoking Stops Here* movement.

The report is available by clicking on 'Tobacco Use Rates Decline in Maryland' under the 'Hot Issues' link on the DHMH Web site at www.dhmh.state.md.us or on www.smokingstopshere.com.

The Balanced Manager

The Balanced Manager, Build and Balance Your Management Skills is a series of management development classes presented by the DHMH Training Services Division.

The classes cover a variety of topics, including leadership, customer service, change management, coaching/mentor-

ing, stress management, motivation, planning and goal setting, communication skills, negotiating, and recruiting/hiring.

Although these sessions are geared toward DHMH managers and supervisors, all employees are invited to attend. The classes will be held monthly.

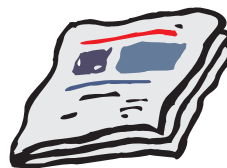
For further information, log onto the TSD Web site at www.dhmh.state.md.us/tsd/ or call Jackie Talley 410-931-1422.



Casani to Speak on Bioterrorism Preparedness

Dr. Julie Casani, Bioterrorism Coordinator for the Department, is this month's guest speaker for the Bioterrorism Speaker Series. She will speak on *Bioterrorism and Emergency Preparedness* on Tuesday, February 17, from 12:15 - 12:45 p.m. in the O'Connor Building's L-3 conference room.

Potato chips and sodas will be provided to all who attend. For further information, please contact Clifford Smith at 410-767-5732.



Report Shows Health Care Expenditures Increased

Total health care spending for Maryland residents increased to \$22.6 billion in 2002 up from \$20.4 billion in 2001, according to a report released in January

by the Maryland Health Care Commission.

The report, *State Health Care Expenditures: Experience from 2002*, also found that home health care (20 percent), prescription drugs (18 percent), and hospital out-patient services (14 percent) had the most rapid growth in spending. The prescription drug increase is on top of a 22 percent jump in 1999, a modest 11 percent increase in 2000, and a 14 percent increase in 2001.

Other major findings include:

- Medicare (22 percent) and Medicaid (18 percent) account for 40 percent of total health care spending, about the same share of total spending as all private third party coverage (39 percent) including commercial and non-profit insurers, health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and self-insured employer plans.
- Consumer spending out-of-pocket, consisting of co-payments, deductibles, and full direct payments, grew at 15 percent, a rate that was higher than that of any third party payer.
- Consumer retreat from HMOs continued in 2002 — only about 33 percent of the privately insured population was enrolled in HMOs, down from a high of about 50 percent 1998.

The complete report is available on the MHCC Web site at www.mhcc.state.md.us. A paper copy of the report is available by calling 410-764-3570.

From Springfield . . . Betty Jean Maus, Director of Volunteer Services at the Springfield Hospital Center writes:

Our 2003 Holiday Season was a great success at Springfield, thanks to the many people in our community and surrounding areas who shared the joy of giving. The Springfield employees, along with many volunteers, worked together to ensure our patients experienced a very nice holiday at Springfield.

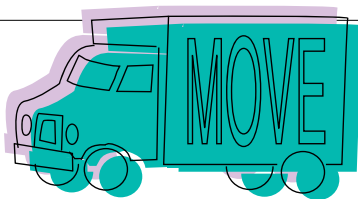
We are so thankful for our volunteers, donors and staff and are always in need of more, as are so many other organizations. We try throughout the year and during the holidays to provide for the needs of the patients, but this can only be accomplished when people like each of you are willing to share and work together. *Again, many thanks!*

TSD Moves

In late January, the DHMH Training Services Division (TSD) moved to the White Marsh area of Baltimore County.

The new address is 5024 Campbell Boulevard, Suite L, Baltimore, MD 21236. The main phone number is 410-931-1422.

Classes conducted by the TSD will be split between the regional campuses of the Community Colleges of Baltimore County.



Every Woman Needs to Know About Heart Disease



Even though cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of Maryland women, only about a third know the facts about heart disease. A woman's risk starts to rise around age 40 but heart disease develops gradually and can even start in the teenage years.

Coronary heart disease, commonly referred to as heart disease, is the main cardiovascular disease affecting both genders. It is also the number one cause of death among Maryland men.

Women don't always take their risk of heart disease seriously. They often fail to make the connection between risk factors — such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and diabetes — and their own chance of developing heart disease.

Women and men also respond differently to a heart attack. Women are less likely than men to believe they're having a heart attack and may delay seeking emergency treatment. The most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. Women are also more likely to experience other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

To the women and men of Maryland — please make your heart health a priority during February's recognition of **American Heart Month**.

Women can take action today and learn how to lower their risk of cardiovascular disease

Continued

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, February 17 — **Bioterrorism Speakers Series**; O'Connor Building Lobby Conference Room L-3; 12:15 - 12:45 p.m.
Phone 410-767-5732 for more information.

Wednesday, February 18 - **Black History Month Celebration**;
O'Connor Building Lobby; 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Phone 410-767-6600 for more information.

Friday and Saturday, March 26 - 27 — *Course: Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias*; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. For more information, please call 410-955-3169 or 410-955-2959.

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 20 - 21 — **Blood Drive**,
9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. O'Connor Building lobby. Call Stephanie Brown at 410-767-6403 for more information or to reserve a time.

Sunday, May 2 — **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Walk**;
Centennial Park in Howard County; check-in: 10:00 a.m., walk: 11:00 a.m. Co-sponsored by the Mental Hygiene Administration. Call Jean Smith at 410-402-7517 for more information.

Every Woman Needs to Know About Heart Disease *Continued*

by visiting www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/lower/index.htm and clicking on 'lower heart disease risk.' You will find questions you can ask your doctor, a risk assessment quiz and healthy food recipes — in English and Spanish. Then, click on "stories from the heart" to read moving stories of women who are living with heart disease.



Warning signs of heart attack and stroke for both women and men are available at www.nhlbi.nih.gov/actintime. Additional information is available by contacting Peggy Yen in the Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition at yenp@dnhmh.state.md.us.

Editor's Note: Thanks to the staff in the Family Health Administration's Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition for writing this article.



Dietary Supplements: Sorting Fact from Fiction

People often choose to supplement their diets with vitamins, minerals and herbals with the hope of maintaining or improving their health. Many try ginkgo biloba to improve memory, or Echinacea and vitamin C to ward off cold symptoms.

While the choice to use a dietary supplement can be a wise decision that provides health benefits, these products may be unnecessary or even create unexpected risks for some individuals. To complicate matters further, supplement manufacturers are not subject to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval, while prescription and over-the-counter drugs must meet rigorous

FDA safety and effectiveness standards to be sold in the U.S.

With the abundance and conflicting nature of available information, sorting fact from fiction can prove difficult at best. So how can consumers make educated decisions concerning dietary supplements?

Check with your doctor before using supplements of any kind.

If you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have a chronic medical problem like heart disease or diabetes, supplements may not be right for you. Some may interact with prescription or over-the-counter medications to produce adverse effects. For example, Coumadin, a prescription medication, ginkgo biloba (an herb), aspirin (an OTC drug) and vitamin E (a vitamin supplement) can each thin the blood. Taking any of these products together can increase the risk for dangerous internal bleeding.

Buy from large, well-known health food shops, vitamin stores and drugstore chains.

These consumer outlets usually purchase from reputable suppliers. Don't fall victim to the claims of late-night info-mercials or questionable online suppliers.

Don't make assumptions about supplements. For example, don't assume that even if a product may not help you, at least it won't hurt you. All chemicals — including nutrients and plant components — can be toxic when consumed in high enough amounts. Don't assume that 'natural' means a product is healthful. Also, don't assume a product is safe just because there are no warnings of adverse effects on the label. Manufacturers don't always include warnings on their products.

Contact the manufacturer for more information about products that interest you. Look for a phone number and Web site information printed on the label. Call and ask for details to substantiate product claims of health benefits. Find out if the company has ever received any reports of adverse reactions from people using their products.

Finally, educate yourself about the supplements you are considering. The National Institutes of Health maintains information, safety alerts and recent supplement research at www.dietarysupplements.info.nih.gov.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Tara Snyder, Community Health Educator in the Center of Health Promotion, Education and Tobacco Use Prevention, for writing this article.



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